(b) As per the prescribed mode of disposal, confiscated gold is deposited in the Government of India Mint.

(c) Government is aware of the rising prices of gold and silver.

(d) Gold and silver are not essential commodities. Government has not, therefore, found it necessary to regulate the prices of these metals.

(e) The factors responsible for the rise in prices of gold and silver generally are:—

1. Seasonal demand on account of marriages, etc.
2. Shortage of ready-stock.
3. Effective anti-smuggling measures.

However, in respect of gold, the increase in price can also be attributed to:—

1. Higher overseas prices of gold
2. The fall in the value of Dollar
3. Fall in contraband arrivals due to effective checks.

Prices of both these metals are highly sensitive to speculations.

Pension cases of Freedom Fighters from Bihar

*17. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of pension cases of freedom fighters from Bihar pending with his Ministry (category-wise) as on 31st December, 1987;

(b) what is the number of such cases which have been pending for more than one year, two years and three years and what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps are being taken for their early disposal?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (c) As a result of a special drive conducted during July-August, 1986, all pending cases from Bihar excepting those relating to participation in Arya Samaj Movement in Hyderabad were disposed of and pension sanctioned where acceptable evidence was produced by the applicants.

194 cases of participation in Arya Samaj Movement are pending as on 31.12.1987. These cases are pending for less than 2 years. A Non-Officials Screening Committee has been set up to scrutinise cases pertaining to the Arya Samaj Movement.

Effect of dependence on non-resident Indians

*18. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether increasing dependence on NRIs has resulted in fall in exchange assets in real terms; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

National Integration Council

*19. DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY:
SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the names of members of the National Integration Council at present;

(b) whether Government have received representations to reconstitute the Council to make it more representative in character and broad-based; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?